

CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2024



TACKLING
THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY
TOGETHER IN SOUTHWARK

Southwark
Council



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FOREWORD

“Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019, Southwark Council have taken significant steps as we seek to make our borough net zero by 2030.”

Councillor John Batteson
Cabinet Member for Climate
Emergency, Jobs and Business

As we reach the half way point on that journey, the current climate reality becomes starker – natural disasters, food and water insecurity and more extreme weather conditions. Climate change does not respect borders; we are not immune to its impact in Southwark and we need to confront these challenges head-on. That is why we made a commitment to do all we can to reduce emissions across our borough and make it more resilient to the effects of climate change.

A notable addition to this year’s annual report is the inclusion of our climate resilience and adaptation strategy, which will prepare the borough to respond to climate effects such as flooding, drought and extreme heat. We know that some people across Southwark, particularly the elderly, those with underlying health conditions and our ethnic minority communities are more likely to feel these impacts. So while the climate impacts everyone across our borough, we also know how important it is as we work towards achieving a more equal society.

This report recognises the progress that has been made through our climate strategy, particularly over the last 12 months. However, it also highlights the significant challenges we face as a borough in reaching net zero, most notably a lack of sufficient funding and resources, without which we will not reach where we need to be by 2030. Time is of the essence and governments across the world need to demonstrate the required leadership in tackling the climate emergency.

These challenges will not stop us making progress in Southwark though and rather than presenting an insurmountable hurdle, they also provide plenty of opportunities. The council cannot make the borough net zero alone. It is only through ongoing collaboration with local people, businesses and the wider community that everyone can feel confident playing their part in tackling the climate emergency and make our borough and the planet a better place for future generations.





INTRODUCING THE ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Since declaring a climate emergency in 2019 we have been taking urgent action. Our Climate Change Strategy (2021) and the Council Delivery Plan (2022) are clear on the level of urgency needed to end our borough's contribution to climate change. This year's annual report builds on these by looking back on the year to highlight how we are taking decisive action in Southwark. We also set out some of our top priorities for the year ahead.

Over the last year, the climate emergency continued to deepen. Globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record. Temperatures rose by so much that the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) issued a "red alert" on

climate change. We have also seen a year of climate-driven natural disasters, from devastating flooding to wildfires and drought.

Whilst we did not experience any natural disasters in Southwark in 2023, we are still vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Overheating and flooding already affects the lives and health of many of us in the borough. We took our first steps to tackle this through the borough's first climate resilience and adaptation strategy. This was developed, consulted on and approved this year. At its core is a commitment to prioritise the areas that are the most vulnerable to impacts of climate change with funding, resources and action.

In bringing down our carbon emissions, we also have a huge chance to change our borough for the better. Our Streets for People programme has begun to show exactly how we can do this. It is continuing to transform our streets to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport. We have also begun the vital work of making our buildings more efficient and have started work that will reduce energy use across our leisure centres.



Streets for People is helping more residents cycle in the borough



Customer borrowing an item from Library of Things Canada Water

We're also rolling out green projects which make our lives easier, like our first Library of Things. It opened in June 2023 and has already helped hundreds of residents save money and help the environment.

However, we continue to face enormous challenges. For example, there are large gaps in national and local funding and this makes it harder to green our buildings. More needs to be done and we need to be innovative with our solutions. At the same time, we need to highlight and overcome the challenges before us. This year, we took a large step forward in this with the first round of Southwark Green Investment, which provided the opportunity for members of the public to invest in climate projects across the

borough, with individual investments starting from as little as £5. In total the council raised £1 million in just eight weeks and will now look to raise £5 million more.

We'll continue to do everything we can. The past year has shown that by moving our action plan forward, we can reduce emissions and prepare for the future, whilst at the same time, continuing to improve the lives of people and future generations across our borough.



CARBON EMISSIONS IN SOUTHWARK

How we measure emissions

To end our contribution to climate change we need to get the borough's carbon emissions down to zero. We measure emissions in kilotons of carbon dioxide equivalents. We write this as kt CO₂e.

ONE = **1000**
kiloton tonnes

ONE
tonne of carbon
is the same as



flight from a London airport to the east coast of the US

OR



driving between John O'Groats and Land's End four times in the average car

Emissions are sorted into three groups, which we call scopes. These are:

- **Scope one**, which covers direct emissions from things we own or control
- **Scope two**, which covers indirect emissions from energy that we have bought
- **Scope three**, which includes all other emissions that occur in making all the things we buy

We also monitor these emissions from the borough as a whole. This includes all homes, businesses and journeys in the borough, as well as emissions that are within the control of the council from our own buildings, vehicles and what we buy.

What the latest information shows

Our updated data shows a drop in emissions across the borough for the fourth year in a row, from 809 to 785 kt CO₂e. Emissions from domestic buildings have fallen. Emissions from industrial and commercial sectors have risen. Emissions from road transport have continued to decrease compared to last year.

Whilst we are glad to see a reduction in emissions, it is clear that the current pace leaves us off track to end the borough's contribution to climate change by 2030. This isn't a problem that is unique to Southwark. It is challenging local and national governments across the world. Yet, by facing up to this challenge we have been able to identify what we need to do and where we need to direct our efforts. We can see that focusing on heating and powering buildings is vital. These activities contribute to 80% of scope one and two emissions in Southwark.



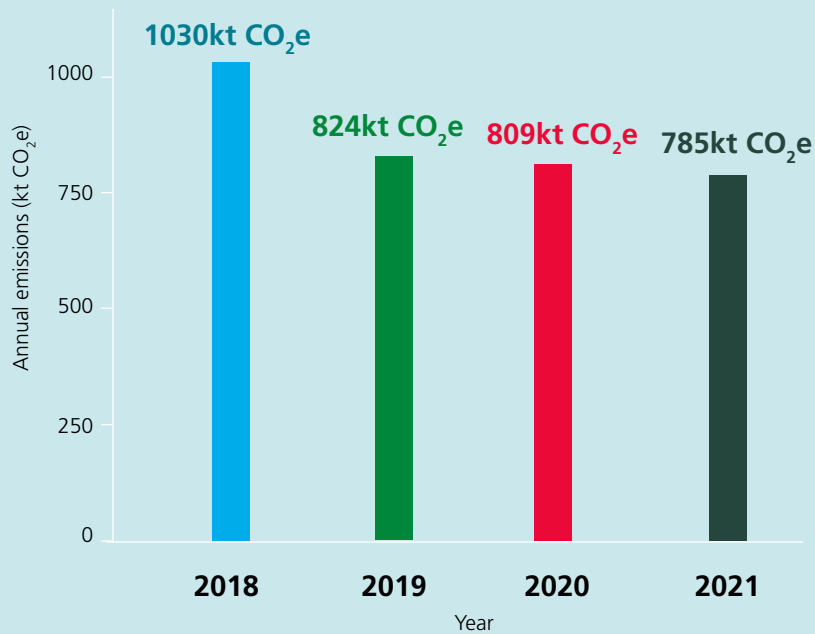


Borough-wide emissions in Southwark

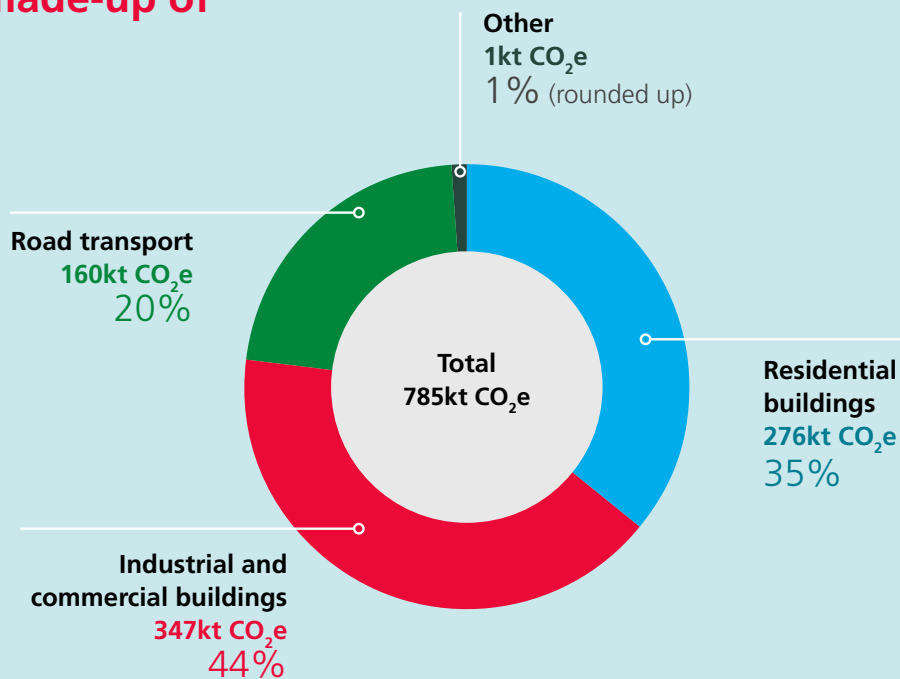
For this information, we rely on large national datasets from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. There is a delay in publishing these datasets, which means the latest information is three years behind. This is why the latest up-to-date figures are for 2021.



Borough wide emissions over the last four years



This is made-up of



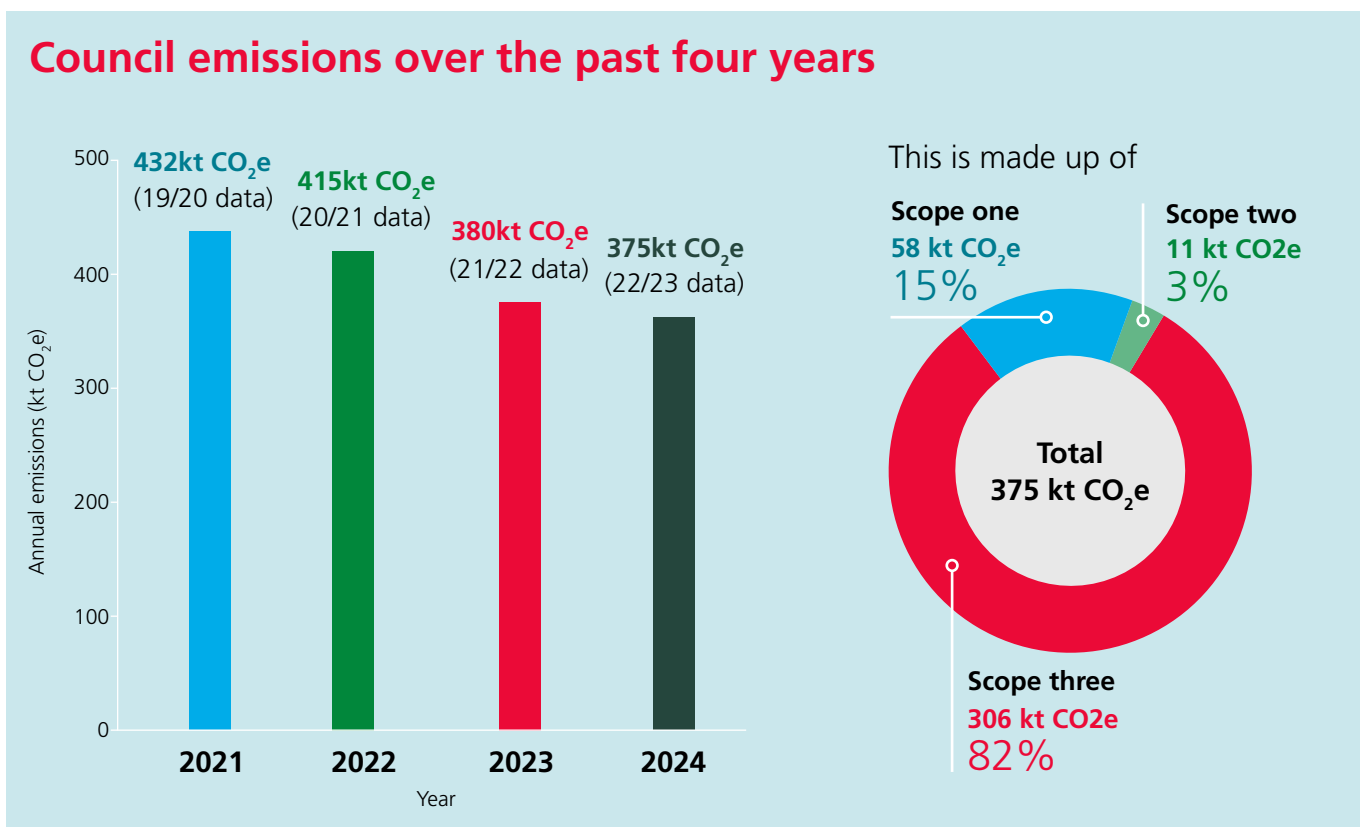
Emissions from the council

We're also focussing in detail on emissions from the council, which form part of the borough wide figures set out above. We have set a target to halve our operational council emissions by 2026. We have reduced our emissions as a council for the fourth year running, decreasing from 380 to 375 kt CO₂e.

Our scope one and two emissions both showed reductions when compared to last year, decreasing from 74 to 69 kt CO₂e. Housing remains the biggest source of emissions, accounting for 85% of scope one and two.

Housing emissions have fallen overall for the third year in a row, reducing from 59 to 57 kt CO₂e. Whilst we are happy to see these reductions, the scale of the challenge means that we need to start to see much greater cuts to emissions.

Scope three emissions have stayed the same at 306 kt CO₂e. These still make up the majority of the council's footprint at 82% of the total. This shows the positive impact we can have by greening our supply chain more and reducing these emissions.



WORKING ACROSS THE BOROUGH

Whilst we are working hard to reduce the council's emissions, most emissions in Southwark are outside the council's direct control. This means working with our residents, businesses, partners and others to take action. This section highlights some ways the council is doing this.

Southwark Green Investment

This year we launched the first phase of Southwark Green Investment where we raised £1 million in eight weeks. The money was raised from 659 public investors, who were a mix of residents and businesses. In total, a record 111 local people invested, totalling £305,930.

This was the first phase of the project which aims to raise £6 million by 2030. It will engage residents in local climate work each step of the way. The success of the first phase shows we have lots of interest in the borough for getting involved in climate action.

The first phase of
SOUTHWARK GREEN INVESTMENT

**RAISED
£1 MILLION
IN EIGHT WEEKS**



An advertising poster for Southwark Green Investment. The top half has a light blue background with the text 'INVEST AND GET A 4.6% ANNUAL RETURN' in large green letters, and 'Join hundreds of others and help fund green projects in Southwark' in smaller green letters below it. The middle section shows a photograph of three people (two men and one woman) smiling and planting a small tree in a pot. To the right of the photo, text reads: 'Don't miss out! This is a time-limited investment opportunity. Once we raise £1 million, phase one will close. Invest from £5 and get a 4.6% annual return.' Below the photo is a blue button with the text 'Head to southwark.gov.uk/green-investment'. The bottom section has a light green background with small text: 'As with all investments your capital is at risk. Investments are long term and may not be readily realisable. This content has been approved as a financial promotion by Abundance Investment, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (525432). Approval date: 7 March 2024.' At the bottom left is the logo for 'TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY TOGETHER IN SOUTHWARK' and at the bottom right is the Southwark Council logo.

Advertising poster for the first round of Southwark Green Investment



External engagement

Over the last year, we enhanced the way that we are engaging with various groups in the borough.

Community stakeholder panel

This group includes local organisations that are interested in climate change and groups that represent local communities. It held its first meeting in September 2023 and is now holding quarterly meetings.

Southwark climate action schools network

This started in 2022, and now includes 21 schools. Over the next year, we will be continuing to grow the network and will be helping schools to adopt a school climate plan.

Delivery partner network

This group includes our large organisations, like universities and hospitals. The group held its first meeting in January 2024 and will work to share knowledge and identify opportunities to work together to deliver our climate ambition, for example through partnering on funding bids.



We will be continuing to grow our network of climate schools next year



An immersive performance by the Black Men's Consortium at Southwark Climate Day

Local businesses

We have been using a range of forums to engage with businesses. This year we have been helping the Southwark Climate Collective. This is a new network created to help small and medium sized businesses take positive environmental action.

Southwark biodiversity partnership

This group has been running since 2004 to help promote and protect local nature. It plays a vital role in managing our green spaces for plants and wildlife.

Southwark Climate Day

This year Southwark Climate Day took place on 22 June 2024. The event brought together over 350 people who live, work and spend time in the borough. The day included immersive theatre, skills workshops and wildlife talks. We also had free clothes swaps, places to get household items repaired and bike servicing.



THE LAST YEAR IN ACTION

Our climate action plan details how the council is working to address its emissions. A full set of actions, milestones and progress can be viewed through the climate action plan online dashboard at southwark.gov.uk/climate-dashboard



*New LED lighting
at Peckham Library*

Tackling our own emissions

We have been working hard to set an example and reduce our own emissions, through a range of projects.

Greener buildings

We have set ourselves the target of halving the council's operational emissions by 2026. We committed £5 million from the council's climate capital fund to support this.

We're focussing on our buildings, as the biggest sources of emissions, particularly our libraries and leisure centres. Some key projects delivered this year have seen:

- a major £1.5 million refurbishment at Peckham Library with new LED lighting and low-carbon heating
- installing heat pumps at 11 other council buildings, including John Harvard Library and Peckham Registry Office
- new pool covers at some of our leisure centres to help us save costs and reduce wasted energy

We're also continuing to roll-out new LED streetlights. We have replaced 9138 of these and are ahead of schedule to replace 11,000 across the borough.

Divesting our pension fund

As of March 2024, there has been a 79% reduction in our pension fund's carbon footprint. This is a further 19% from the previous year.

100,000 trees milestone

The council are about to celebrate the planting of the 100,000th tree in Southwark, this included planting 5,000 trees between November 2023 and March 2024. We currently estimate our canopy cover to be 18% of the borough. This included working with 17 schools to plant 586 trees and getting 225 volunteers involved.



**5,000
NEW TREES
PLANTED**



**17 SCHOOLS
HELPED PLANT
586 TREES**

Helping communities take action

Library of Things

In June 2023, we opened Southwark's first Library of Things at Canada Water Library. As of March 2024, over 700 residents have used the service, borrowing items instead of buying them. It has saved the borrowers over £140,000, saved 21 tonnes of carbon and 7.5 tonnes of waste from going to landfill.

700 RESIDENTS BORROWED

**SAVED BORROWERS
£140,000**

**SAVING 21 TONNES
OF CARBON**



Library of Things at Canada Water Library



Two expert advisors at the LBSU Energy Advice Centre

Providing free green homes advice

We have continued to support the Energy Advice Centre at London Southbank University. This provides a free green homes advice service for residents. Over the past year, it gave 128 pieces of advice out to help residents make their homes more efficient and reduce bills. We have also added a new offer, which provides advice to residents to stay cooler in the summer.

Energy savers service

The energy savers service continues to run. This is a services available through Citizen's Advice Southwark. Since opening in 2022, it has delivered £227,686 of support to residents looking to save on their heating bills. So far, it has supported 741 vulnerable residents (as of January 2024).



Southwark Community Energy Fund

We opened the first round of our community energy fund. This is for community groups, schools and faith groups to make green improvements to their buildings. £400,000 has been awarded to 22 projects – from solar panels on schools to a fuel poverty outreach programme.

“This funding launched our mission to help relieve fuel poverty on local council estates. It will fund the feasibility studies for installing solar panels on the roofs of the estates, selling the electricity to local businesses, and using the surpluses to help families experiencing, or at risk of, fuel poverty”

Clive Shaw from SE1 Solar, a community benefit society based in Borough and Bermondsey which have been awarded funding.



Clive Shaw with Kipling Estate resident Beverley

Community gardening network

We have a network of community gardeners that we are continuing to grow. This also supports food growing in the borough. This year we have launched a new Compost Doctor service to help gardeners and new groups learn more about how to compost.

Over the past year we have exceeded our objective of creating 200 plots, by creating 211 plots, with a further nine planned. This includes 26 plots at Rouel Road, our biggest community garden built yet.



Rouel Road Allotment





*Cycle skills training
in Southwark*



**CYCLE
TRAINING FOR
6000
RESIDENTS**



**INCREASED
CYCLE
HANGARS TO
738**



**29
MORE
SCHOOL
STREETS**



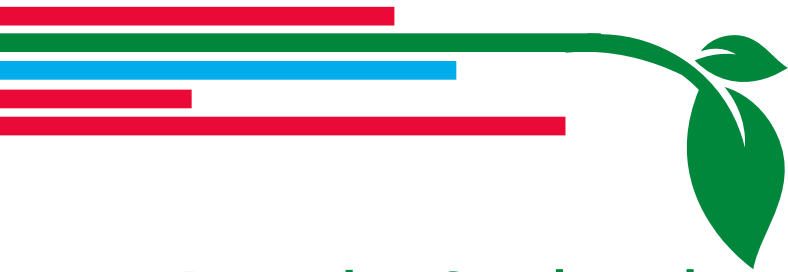
**INCREASED
CHARGING
POINTS TO
1600**

Streets for People

In July last year we launched our Streets for People strategy which set out a major expansion of our active travel work. Through this programme we have seen a number of successes already as:

- the number of school streets has increased to 29
- over 6,000 residents have taken part in our cycling training
- more than 3,000 people have downloaded the new BetterPoints app, which “pays” residents to walk, cycle or take public transport by rewarding them with points that can be spent at local businesses or donated to charity
- a new sharing scheme was launched, allowing businesses, community groups and individuals to hire out a new fleet of electric cargo bikes
- 244 residents took up our bike loan scheme
- we installed 738 cycle hangars to increase the spaces for residents to store their bicycles safely

We’ve delivered 1600 electric vehicle charge points in the borough – surpassing our target for delivering 1000 more. We also have developed an electric vehicle plan. This will help us take this work even further and make sure there is access to charging points in every part of the borough.



Preparing Southwark

As well as taking action to reduce our emissions, we are also working to respond to the impacts of climate change that are already being felt. Last year we adopted our first climate resilience and adaptation strategy. This followed a public consultation in autumn 2023. The strategy sets out how we will protect communities, homes, infrastructure, and the environment from the impacts of climate change. This includes extreme weather such as heat and flooding, risks to water and food supply as well as the emergence of new pests and diseases.

In our consultation we heard from residents and businesses about the impacts of climate change that are already being felt. It painted a vivid picture for the importance of this strategy in Southwark. It showed us that despite being a relatively small area the impacts of climate change are felt very differently, depending on where you live or work in the borough.

The strategy is being supported by £1 million of funding to spend on key projects. These projects will address things such as flooding and overheating in areas more exposed to climate change. A detailed action plan has been produced that builds on resident feedback, such as developing an approach to address 'hot homes' in the borough, something highlighted by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, whose landmark study revealed the effects of hotter summers on UK housing.



Planting scheme on Maurice close with tree planting and rain garden which helps combat flooding.





The circular economy was promoted as part of Southwark Climate Day



Supporting green businesses

Climate collective

Southwark Climate Collective now offers expert advice to small and medium businesses in the borough. This advice is on waste, freight, energy, and supply chains. This will support 160 businesses across the borough to make plans for reducing emissions.

Pioneers fund

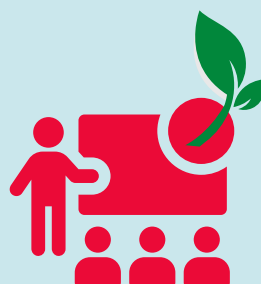
Southwark Pioneers Fund is our programme of support for business founders and aspiring entrepreneurs in Southwark. So far 15 green businesses have been supported in the last financial year.

More of the year in numbers



1817
GREEN JOBS
CREATED

in roles ranging from insulation and lighting to tree planting



341
SOUTHWARK
RESIDENTS

trained through
LSBU Green
Skills Hub

LOOKING AHEAD

Greening our buildings

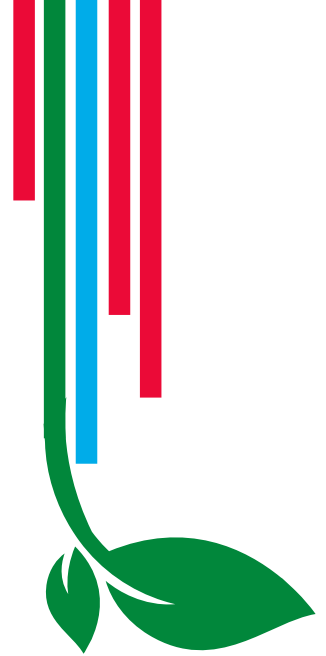
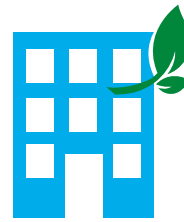
There will be an ongoing focus on our programme of greening our buildings, concentrating our effort on our largest buildings and leisure centres.

We will be putting strategies into place for different types of buildings we own and use. This will help us target our work and money on the most inefficient buildings.

Streets for People

We will be continuing to support the borough to move away from favouring cars by freeing up space for walking, cycling and public transport. This includes:

- agreeing plans for how we will deliver the changes that residents told us they would like to see on their streets, during our year of engagement, and continuing with implementation
- continuing to deliver cycle training to adults and children of all ages
- launching our walking, cycling and electric vehicle plans



Southwark 2030 strategy

We will use our work to deliver the goals of Southwark 2030. Each Southwark 2030 goal has a direct link to action that tackles the climate emergency in a just and fair way. These goals are:

- decent homes for all
- a good start in life
- a safer Southwark
- a strong and fair economy
- staying well
- a healthy environment

This will support our ambition to build a better future for our residents and provides the opportunity to align our climate action with the priorities residents have set out for the borough.



Feedback from school children as part of Streets for People

Council supply chain emissions

We will be creating a new approach to reducing the emissions that result from the contracts and services we buy. As shown by the data above, this is the largest area of emissions (scope three) that we as a council are responsible for. This will allow the council to understand the areas of greatest opportunity, given the scale of what we purchase, and to then work more directly with suppliers in reducing emissions.

Helping residents tackle their emissions

We will be rolling out food waste collections to every household in Southwark. Food waste collections will help us reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Less waste going to landfill will help us to reduce carbon emissions.



Strengthening our planning policy

Work to enhance planning requirements is well underway. Improved policy in this area is vital in ensuring new development considers both its climate impacts through reduced emissions, but also resilience to issues such as overheating and flooding. The council has been working on major pieces of planning policy and guidance to help us do this and will hold a public consultation on these this year:

- an early review of relevant parts of the Southwark Plan
- new Climate and Environment, and Householder Supplementary Planning Documents

These will help ensure that new development responds to the climate emergency.

Our 2025 strategy and action plan update

In September 2025, we will be at the halfway point on the journey to doing all we can to be a carbon neutral borough. We need to make sure that our strategy and action plan are still as targeted and effective as possible. To do this we will be carrying out a mid-point review and refresh. This is an important piece of work to make sure we can make the best use of the next five years of climate work.



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Each year we set out how we are responding to ongoing challenges around funding, resource and behaviour change. These barriers continue to affect our ability to match action to the scale of our ambition.

Funding

There continues to be an immense funding gap, which needs to be closed if we are going to realise our ambition to become carbon neutral. In 2021, we estimated the capital cost of delivering the strategy to be £3.92 billion. Given the significant increase in inflation since 2021, this funding gap is getting larger as costs increase.

£6 MILLION
raised by 2030 through
Southwark Green Investment

What we're doing

- green finance has been a major focus for the past year and will continue to be for the next year, with a dedicated Deputy Cabinet Member in post
- we launched Southwark Green Investment, which will raise £6 million by 2030 whilst also creating new opportunities for residents and businesses to get involved
- we are actively applying for external funding opportunities wherever possible with an ongoing stream of applications. We will also explore opportunities to work with other London boroughs on joint funding applications
- maximising spend from existing funding pots such as the Green Buildings Fund
- actively lobbying government on council housing financing. In March 2024 we hosted a major summit with council leaders from across the country. We discussed the future of our country's council housing and to agree what is needed to establish a green and decent homes programme that both improves the quality of housing and accelerates climate action.



In February 2024, we signed the climate bond pledge as we launched Southwark Green Investment



Resources

There are also challenges around resources and the expertise needed across the borough to reduce carbon. Our wide-ranging actions need to be delivered at pace but also have to be done alongside other demands. Similarly, if we are to reduce emissions many more people need to be trained in new green jobs to carry out this work.

What we're doing

- we have addressed some resource gaps, with roles focussed on maximising external funding opportunities and increased project management resource on energy related work. However, we recognise that this is a council-wide challenge and with that in mind will be launching climate change training for wider staff
- at a borough level, we also continue to work hard to address the skills gap that exists in delivering a green future, through London South Bank University Green Skills Hub

Changing behaviours

To deliver our action plan for the whole borough, we will need extensive behaviour change from stakeholders, businesses and residents across the borough.

What we're doing

- our streets for people programme is helping increase active travel in the borough by supporting residents to do more walking and cycling
- we have established new engagement networks with key stakeholder groups to help us engage more meaningfully with different communities in the borough and will also be hosting our annual Climate Day
- we are also continuing to promote ranges of positive climate change behaviours as part of other council projects and communications such as through our green savers campaign



FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS NEXT YEAR

Keep up to date with our work by visiting our website www.southwark.gov.uk/climate

From here you can also sign-up for our regular climate newsletter with information about climate events, news, jobs and funding opportunities in the borough.

Go to www.southwark.gov.uk/environment/climate-emergency-sign-up